

Get it in writing

Whatever work you do as a teacher, it should be covered by a written contract.

A written contract is an essential form of protection for your teaching practice as it sets out the terms and conditions for your relationship with your pupils. It also professionalises your work and ensures that you are covered for all eventualities.

How the Musicians' Union can help

The Musicians' Union has bespoke contracts covering **private work** and template contracts for **self-employed work** in schools and other institutions.

The MU will follow up unpaid fees on your behalf providing a written contract is in place.

Your MU Regional Office will check any teaching contract that you are offered and will answer any questions you may have about the terms and conditions.

Tips

- Have a policy for missed lessons.
- Make sure you have contact details for all of your pupils' parents or carers.
- Set a notice period for students to inform you when they're giving up.
- Keep copies of all of your contracts.
- Keep to the terms of the contract: issue invoices on time and give good notice of changed or cancelled lessons. This will encourage your pupils to keep to their side of the agreement.
- The MU has recommended minimum rates for private teaching and workshops.
- Give sufficient notice of when you plan to increase your fees.
- It is better to increase fees by a small amount each year, rather than in one occasional big jump.
- Have a system for who enters students for exams and when.

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I've learnt through bitter experience it's better to use contracts. One student ended up owing me £300. If I'd used the MU's contracts they would have contacted the parents on my behalf about the unpaid fees.

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Summary

- Have a contract in place before starting any work.
- The Musicians' Union provides bespoke contracts free of charge to members:
 - T1 – for private teaching
 - T2 – for self-employed teaching in schools
- The Musicians' Union will check over any contracts of employment or engagement for you.
- Understand the terms of your contracts and their implications.
- Ask questions.

